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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, who lays up the deep in storehouses, help us to never turn Your glory to shame. Lord, the hearts of world leaders are in Your hands and Your power guides the Nation.

Today, we thank You for Your infinite wisdom. Each day You demonstrate to us that Your way leads to life and joy. You are at work, bringing answers and insight to those who seek You.

Inspire our Senators to seek Your wisdom. As they wrestle with complex issues, guide their minds. May the wisdom of sacrificial love influence their deliberation.

And Lord, we ask You to comfort the family of Henry Giugni, the former Senate Sergeant at Arms.

We pray in Your blessed Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1042, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1042) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2006 for the military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Today we resume consideration of the Defense authorization bill. Under the agreement reached on October 26, we have a limitation of amendments and debate to Defense authorization. Chairman WARNER and Senator LEVIN are here today and are prepared for Members to come to the floor to offer their defense-related amendments. I noted last night there will be no rollcall votes today, and we will delay votes until Monday at approximately 5:30. We will announce later on how many votes Senators can expect on Monday.

Finally, I do want to thank everybody for their participation and cooperation over the course of yesterday's session, a lengthy session. I think it was 22 consecutive rollcall votes. We didn't have any scheduled breaks and things went very smoothly. Indeed, we were able to meet our goal of 6 o'clock last night to allow Senators to attend what was a wonderful event where we had over 50 former Senators—men and women who had served in this body in the past—come back and join us for a bipartisan event last night. It would not have been possible without the patience of Senators and the efforts of so many staff members who worked so hard to bring that deficit reduction bill to completion by a vote of 52 to 47.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

This was an important piece of fiscal legislation; I think clearly the most important piece of fiscal legislation over the course of the year, a bill that was called the deficit reduction bill be-

cause almost \$35 billion in savings does go down directly to reduce the deficit. That is a period of 4 years, \$35 billion. Over 10 years, it would be right at \$100 billion.

A number of people have said, well, spending cuts that we put in yesterday don't go far enough, and I would not disagree with that statement. The deficit reduction package we passed last night, however, was a major and important first step forward in reining in what has become out-of-control Federal spending, so I congratulate our colleagues.

I also thank the committee chairmen one more time for their hard work and leadership, both sides of the aisle working together. There was in many instances bipartisan support for their recommendations. In particular, I thank the chairman of the Budget Committee, Chairman JUDD GREGG, for his strong leadership. I also thank Senator MCCONNELL, our assistant Republican leader, for his deft handling of the process yesterday, keeping us on track to success.

The Senate staffers, several of them were thanked last night. And there are so many, I always hesitate to start naming them, but in truth, as always, they are the ones who give the discipline to the engine that makes it possible: Kyle Simmons, Scott Gudes, Bill Hoagland, Sharon Soderstrom, Eric Ueland, all deserve special recognition for their tireless efforts in bringing that bill to completion.

By rallying our resources and our will, last night the Senate passed the first spending reduction bill in 8 years. It was last in 1997 that such a reconciliation on the spending side was passed. We took a tough look at the budget, and we came up with a strong package of fiscally responsible savings. And it is worth reflecting where we were even just 10 months ago. We tend to focus so much on minute to minute here and day to day here, but if we look back 10 months ago when the President submitted his budget proposal, at that

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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